

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 04936 271858Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8839

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: SECOND BREJNEV LETTER TO ASAD: QADDUMI CONFIRMS SOVIET
SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS

1. LOCAL SYRIAN JOURNALIST AND AP STRINGER LOUIS FARES TOLD
CHARGE JULY 27 THAT HE HAD MET WITH QADDUMI PREVIOUS EVENING AT
LATTER'S REQUEST. IN ADDITION TO REVEALING TO FARES FOUR POINT
AGREEMENT REACHED THAT DAY BETWEEN SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS,
QADDUMI SAID FOLLOWING:

A) NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN ON VERGE OF BREAKDOWN
EVENING JULY 22. EACH SIDE HAD NEGOTIATING DOCUMENT AND CONFLICTING
POINTS WERE UNRESOLVED. QADDUMI CALLED JALLUD WHO MET TWICE WITH
ASAD AND PERSUADED HIM TO MODIFY SYRIAN POSITION.

B) SOVIET AMBASSADOR MOUKHITDINOV CALLED QADDUMI JULY 24 AND
INVITED QADDUMI AND PALESTINIAN DELEGATION TO LUNCHEON. SOVIET
DEPUTY MINISTER KUZNETSOV (PHON) WAS PRESENT. MOUKHITDINOV
STATED SOVIET UNION WAS SUPPORTING PALESTINIANS, NOT SYRIANS,
AND SHOWED QADDUMI TEXT OF LETTER FROM BREJNEV WHICH HE AND
KUZNETSOV DELIVERED TO ASAD SAME DAY. QADDUMI DESCRIBED
LETTER AS "SHORT AND TOUGH". IT STATED THAT SOVIET UNION
WOULD NOT RESUME ARMS SUPPLIES TO SYRIA UNTIL SYRIA WITHDREW
FROM LEBANON.

C) QADDUMI SAID SOVIET UNION HAD SUSPENDED ARMS SHIPMENTS
TO SYRIA ABOUT A WEEK AFTER KHADDAM'S VISIT TO MOSCOW. AT

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SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 04936 271858Z

SAME TIME. SOVIET UNION HAD INCREASED ARMS SUPPORT FOR

PALESTINIANS. SINCE SYRIA WAS NOT PERMITTING THIS SUPPORT TO COME VIA AIR VIA SYRIA, IT WAS COMING BY SEA. CARRIER "KIEV" CARRIED ARMS AND AMMUNITION FOR PALESTINIAN FORCES, QADDUMI SAID.

D) MOUKHITDINOV DEPARTED DAMASCUS FOR MOSCOW ON CONSULTATION JULY 25.

2. FARES SAID QADDUMI TOLD HIM THAT WHEN ASAD HAD MET WITH PALESTINIAN DELEGATION JULY 26 ASAD HAD GIVEN HIS PERSONAL GUARANTEE ON TWO POINTS: THAT SYRIAN WOULD OBTAIN CHRISTIAN APPROVAL TO AGREEMENT AND THAT SYRIAN FORCES WOULD WITHDRAW FROM SOFAR TO THE BEKAA. LATTER POINT, QADDUMI SAID, WOULD BE THE TRUE TEST OF SYRIAN INTENTIONS.

3. FARES SAID THAT ONCE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED, SYRIAN MEDIATOR MOHAMED AL-KHULI HAD BEEN SENT BY HELICOPTER TO JUNIEH TO OBTAIN FRANJIEH/KFOUR GROUP APPROVAL. HE HAD RETURNED TO DAMASCUS JULY 27 WITH PAKRADUNI WHO HAD INFORMED ASAD CHRISTIANS APPROVED AGREEMENT ON CONDITION THAT ARAB LEAGUE FORCE WOULD BE MORE THAN "OBSERVERS" AND WOULD INTERVENE ACTIVELY AGAINST ANY PARTY BREAKING CEASE-FIRE.

4. FARES ALSO SAID QADDUMI LEFT FOR BEIRUT MORNING JULY 27, HOPING TO RETURN TO DAMASCUS WITH ARAFAT WITHIN 48 HOURS, HE SAID ARAFAT HAD APPROVED AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE AND ALL THAT REMAINED WAS FOR HIM TO MEE WITH ASAD TO SEAL IT. ASAD AND ARAFAT WOULD ALSO AGREE ON TIME CEASE-FIRE TO GO INTO EFFECT.

5. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR MURPHY WILL CONFIRM THAT FARES IS NOT ALWAYS A RELIABLE SOURCE BUT I HAD THE IMPRESSION IN THIS INSTANCE THAT HE WAS PROUD OF HIS SCOOP AND WAS ACCURATELY RELATING HIS CONVERSATION WITH QADDUMI. HE WAS DEMOANING FACT THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PUBLISH QADDUMI'S STATMENTS REGARDING SOVIET PRESSURE ON SYRIA AND SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS, SECOND BREJNEV LETTER TO ASAD, AND ASAD'S PERSONAL GUARANTEES TO PALESTINIANS CONCERNING THE AGREEMENT.
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